

The background of the entire page is a red-tinted photograph of a person's jacket. On the right side, a large Labour Party badge is visible, featuring the party's logo and the word 'Labour' partially obscured. The overall aesthetic is bold and political.

AMBITION FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW

Newcastle Labour Party
Manifesto 2018

AMBITION FOR THE MANY NOT THE FEW

Introduction

Newcastle City Council has been severely affected by the austerity imposed by the Tory / Lib Dem Coalition Government of 2010 – 15 and the Tory Government from 2015 onwards. By 2020, the council will have lost a total of £283m – the equivalent of £268 for every person in the city, or £1000 per household. In contrast, Tory-controlled Wokingham has only lost £2 per person.

The gross unfairness of these cuts has had a huge impact on the services that the council has been able to provide for local residents. But they have also been coupled with a deliberate political strategy by the current Government to localise the blame for them; they've done their best to turn people against their local council. This hasn't fooled residents of Newcastle; they know that the cuts to our city have been disproportionate and unfair, and where the blame lies for their impact.

There is no doubt that austerity has also had a devastating impact on many people in our city. The Bedroom Tax has plunged thousands into financial crisis, with shocking research showing that people have been forced to skip meals and go to bed early to avoid heating costs. Cuts to welfare have left many disabled people without the support they need to remain independent, and cuts to legal aid and advice have left people with no means to right injustices.

Thousands on low pay have been forced to pay council tax for the first time, putting further pressure on overstretched household budgets. In the meantime those on top salaries have seen higher rates of tax reduced, and bankers' bonuses continue unchecked. Those who caused the financial crisis have been allowed off the hook by this Government, and the cost of paying down the deficit they created has fallen on the shoulders of those who had can least afford to pay it. This is morally wrong and indefensible in a civilized society.

In these tough times, Newcastle Labour has sought to achieve two things – to protect the most vulnerable in our city from the worst effects of these cuts, and to invest in our city to build confidence in the future. We have sought to

invest the council's limited resources wisely, and where they can have the greatest impact for the public good. So we have continued to support debt and welfare advice services to help those in financial difficulties, subsidised a council tax support scheme to help those on lowest incomes, and worked with housing providers and charities to alleviate the impact of the bedroom tax. We have invested in the future of our city's young people with apprenticeships and a bursary scheme, developed new specialist housing for older and disabled people, and promoted a Newcastle Living Wage for lower paid staff.

We are installing new cycling routes, investing in roads and pavements, and working with other councils to improve public transport. We have constantly sought innovative new ways of delivering public services with fewer resources, making sure the council is efficient and effective and delivers good value for money.

We are guided, in the tough decisions we have to make, by our values of fairness, inclusion and social justice. We are inspired by the spirit of the communities in our city, the commitment of our businesses, the professionalism of our public sector partners. Our team of Labour councillors comes from all walks of life – but we have one thing in common. We are working hard to make Newcastle a great place to live, work and visit, despite the challenges we face. This manifesto sets out what we seek to achieve in the coming year as we build a Newcastle for the many, not the few.

Nick Forbes

Nick Forbes .

Leader, Newcastle Labour



Employment – Creating more and better jobs

Being in good quality employment isn't just good for you financially; it represents security, dignity, self-respect and hope for the future. Yet far too many people in Newcastle are either out of work, or in work paying poverty wages. The North East has the highest rate of unemployment of any region in England, and since 2010 there have been approximately 2,500 jobs lost from the city council alone. And the proportion of people in paid work but having to use food banks is on the increase.

We want Newcastle to be a city where everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, have a choice of good quality, fairly paid job opportunities. This means working to create a new generation of jobs and ensuring that our residents can develop the skills to do them.

Newcastle Labour will therefore:

- Promote the growth of apprenticeships leading to skilled employment;
- Support the development of employment opportunities across the full range of skills;
- Use the council's powers and influence to discourage the use of abusive zero-hours contracts;
- Provide pre-apprenticeship training and support for young people leaving care;
- Continue to provide the Newcastle Bursary, a scheme which supports young people from low income families to continue in education and training;
- Invest in infrastructure (transport, broadband and regeneration schemes) to make the city an attractive place to locate and grow a business or charity;
- Support the growth of the co-operative economy in the city;
- Work with employers and voluntary sector organisations to apply for funding to provide more affordable childcare in the city to support low income working parents;
- Maintain our commitment to promote access to employment for those who have been disadvantaged / unfairly excluded by disability and / or long term health conditions including enduring mental ill-health.

We are proud that we were the first council in the region to promote a real Living Wage for council employees. More than 2,200 low income staff in the council and schools have benefited. We will continue to publicise the success of the Newcastle Living Wage and commit to consult on a plan to become an accredited Foundation Living Wage employer by 2019. And the success of the council's Welfare Rights Service's experience in securing substantial amounts of money owed to people in hardship by the Government's benefits bureaucracy – money that is then spent in the local economy – means that this service plays a key role in tackling poverty.

Newcastle Labour recognises that the money that the council spends in the city and region is important in helping maintain jobs locally. We take our responsibilities under the Social Value Act seriously – currently 49% of money spent by the council goes to businesses and charities in the city, and 67% to businesses and charities in the region.

We will continue to prioritise local and regional suppliers for the purchase and procurement of goods and services. We will also explore the feasibility of introducing the 'community wealth' and 'progressive procurement' approach to stimulating local economic vitality in co-operation with other public sector institutions.

This year Newcastle and Gateshead will host the Great Exhibition of the North – a unique opportunity to show our city off to new national and international visitors. We will work with others to continue bringing major cultural and sporting events to Newcastle, to raise the profile of the city and boost our tourism economy.



Education and Skills – the best learning opportunities for all

We want Newcastle to be recognised as a great place to be born, grow up, raise a family and develop a career. Having the best possible start in life sets us up for better learning, improved opportunities for life and better career prospects. Helping some families, through the Supporting Families programme, ensures we are protecting the most vulnerable in our city. Working in partnership with schools enables us to raise standards and educational attainment. We believe that everyone should be encouraged to continue with education right throughout their life.

We are committed to Newcastle becoming recognised as a UNICEF Child Friendly City where the voice of children and young people are heard when decisions are made and their rights are respected and upheld. We have supported the Newcastle Youth Council to develop an effective voice for young people in our city, and will continue to engage with its elected members in policy development.

We also recognise that skills for adults are also crucial so we have maintained an effective adult education team to offer ongoing support for basic skills. Our devolution deal will give us a say in how the adult education budget is spent locally. We will work closely with partners, including our excellent Universities and College, to promote Newcastle as a great city to study.

Newcastle Labour will:

- Maintain our commitment to high quality early years provision in the city to address inequality and child poverty, and give all children the best possible start in life;
- Support the offer for free provision for two year olds;
- Continue the support for the Newcastle Bursary Scheme supporting those young people from lower income backgrounds who otherwise would leave education;
- Work with schools and businesses to improve educational attainment and aspiration for all;
- Maintain our commitment to lifelong learning;
- Protect the wider benefits and value of education to enrich people's lives and society;
- Work with schools to ensure that pupils at risk of exclusion are appropriately supported;
- Continue to promote inclusion to ensure all pupils achieve their potential.

We believe that everyone should continue to develop throughout their lives so we will explore ways of supporting those furthest away from skills and learning.

We will continue to support the healthy schools programme that helps ensure children learn about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, know how to keep themselves safe and how to be emotionally healthy.

We will work to widen access to free WiFi, for example through libraries and community hubs, so that everyone can use the internet to inform and educate themselves as well as to access services.



Environment – a clean, green and safe Newcastle

We believe that everyone deserves to live in a clean, pleasant neighbourhood; that everyone should feel safe in their community; and that we should respect future generations by protecting the environment. Our Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan sets out how we will protect and promote wildlife and biodiversity, and our Climate Change Plan commits the city to achieving a 34% reduction in carbon emissions (on 1990 levels) by 2020.

A minority of people make life a misery for others through their thoughtless and irresponsible actions. Flytipping blights some neighbourhoods, rubbish is dumped without thought for the cost of cleaning it up, and some communities suffer from persistent anti-social behaviour.

We will therefore:

- Use the full force of the law to prosecute those who fly tip, including using the council's new powers to seize and crush vehicles of offenders;
- Run a high profile 'anti-littering' enforcement campaign, handing out on-the-spot fines to offenders, as well as encourage school-based education programmes to reduce littering;
- Review commercial waste collection services in the city and enforce the requirement for commercial bins to be stored securely, not be left on the public highway;
- Establish a 'Pride in Newcastle' award to celebrate the excellent work done by many active community groups across the city in protecting and cleaning the environment;
- Use mobile CCTV cameras to target environmental crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots.

In the last year we arranged for a Waste Commission to make long term recommendations to the city. This report found that, whilst many residents in Newcastle are highly committed to recycling, overall our city must do better. In addition, there is growing concern about the impact of plastics on the environment.

We will therefore:

- Review recycling facilities in the city, and pilot food waste collection in a number of areas to see whether this could be rolled out more widely;
- Work with neighbouring authorities to examine the economic case for a new 'waste to energy' facility;
- Aim for Newcastle to be the first UK city to eliminate single-use plastics.

Many local authorities are closing or selling off their parks. Instead, we have been innovative in finding new ways of protecting parks and green spaces as public places accessible to all. We are committed to ensuring that residents have a strong voice in the new arrangements for managing parks.

In the 1960s much of Newcastle City Centre was re-designed to give priority to car drivers. We have begun to reverse this policy, but it will take time to make lasting, sustainable change.

We will therefore:

- Prioritise pedestrians and public transport in the city centre;
- Challenge bus operators (who are private providers, independent of the council) to work towards zero-emissions fleets;
- continue to work with transport providers to provide discounted fares for people accessing education or starting work;
- Campaign for stronger powers to ban cars from idling, especially near schools;
- Continue to invest in new cycling infrastructure, and encourage more people in the city to cycle;
- Work with local residents to develop Play Streets, working alongside local residents to promote safe play spaces for children and to promote healthy outdoor activities.



Health and Social Care – a heathy, caring city

We believe that everyone should be able to live healthy lives. Health is not just affected by personal choices; where we live, our home, our job and the local environment all impact on our physical and mental wellbeing. We want Newcastle to be a recognised World Health Organisation Healthy City and we will work with partners to ensure we are doing all we can to be part of this international network.

There is a lot of concern about poor air quality in some areas of Newcastle. This is caused by a range of factors, including diesel-powered cars, vans and buses. We will therefore develop a comprehensive plan to improve air quality. This will include increasing the number of people who choose to walk or cycle for short journeys, rather than driving; dealing with congestion 'hotspots' where traffic delays cause additional pollution, and discouraging engine idling outside schools. We want to promote increased use of ultra low emission vehicles in Newcastle and will bid to Government for funds to help increase the infrastructure supporting electric vehicles. We will also campaign for Government action on air quality, including a scrappage scheme for older polluting diesel vehicles.

One of our priorities is making sure that people have the right health and care support in order to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Newcastle has a population with a growing proportion of older people, often who have complex needs, as well as greater numbers of people with learning and physical disabilities.

Newcastle Labour will:

- Continue to lobby central Government for a fair funding formula and adequate long term funding for adult social care;
- Invest in innovative pilots to test new ways of providing social care support for people (including telecare);
- Explore the financial viability of developing 'in house' adult care services;
- Support carers, promote the important work they do and recognise that their work reduces pressures elsewhere in the health and care system;
- Support people to live independently for as long as possible by providing care and support services, integrated with supported housing, in local areas;
- Work with partners to make Newcastle a dementia-friendly city.

We recognise the huge pressure that our NHS is under. The Tory Government has failed to fund it to keep up with increased demand, and many of their policies are designed to undermine the concept of health care free for all at the point of delivery.

Newcastle Labour will:

- Campaign to protect GP surgeries and other primary care services in the most disadvantaged communities;
- Use the powers of scrutiny to hold the regional health organisations to account to address the concerns of privatisation in the NHS;
- Oppose plans to create NHS hospital 'chains' with remote management and reduced accountability to local communities.

We will also use the council's powers to promote better health in the population.

We will:

- Be the first 'Heart Start City' by ensuring defibrillators are available in a range of places, including businesses, schools and public buildings and encouraging people of all ages to learn basic life support;
- Address the issues around mental health by recognising the work of the city council in promoting good mental health amongst its employees, by supporting measures to challenge stigma and by ensuring that partners provide appropriate treatment and support services which are accessible to all communities in our city;
- Continue to lobby the government for better powers to address public health concerns especially in licensing and minimum alcohol pricing;
- Work on policies that reduce access to hot food takeaways across the city, not just in proximity to schools.



Housing – building more and better homes

We believe that everyone deserves to live in a decent home, have good quality community facilities in their local neighbourhood and be supported if they have particular housing needs.

Our approach to housing is therefore to:

- Promote the building of new homes, many at affordable rates, so that people have a good quality choice of homes to rent or to buy;
- Actively support people to maintain their tenancy, so that they avoid becoming homeless;
- Provide specialist support for those who are homeless, those seeking asylum or those who have specialist health or disability needs;
- Tackle the empty properties that blight some neighbourhoods;
- Use the council's regulatory powers to promote decent housing standards for all.

We want Newcastle to be known as a 'Fair Landlord' city – where private sector tenants feel they are charged a fair rent, that their homes are decent and kept in good repair. To achieve this, we will consider extending selective licensing schemes to cover the whole of the city.

We have worked with developers to provide much needed homes for residents and built more homes in the last year than have been built in Newcastle in the last 30 years. We are committed to building social homes for rent as well as to buy. We have also worked with Your Homes Newcastle to develop new council homes.

Newcastle Labour will;

- Work with developers and Government to accelerate the rate of housebuilding in Newcastle, prioritising the use of brownfield sites;
- Campaign for all homes in the city to be fit for human habitation;
- Support a range of community initiatives to develop new homes, including co-operative housing models, self-build schemes and university pilot schemes to demonstrate new housebuilding technology;
- Support energy efficiency schemes wherever possible to make sure residents spend as little as possible heating their homes and are offered the opportunity to switch providers;
- Use funding generated through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy arrangements to support community facilities and environmental improvement schemes;
- Ensure effective enforcement is in place to tackle rogue developers and landlords;

- Work on an accreditation scheme for private landlords with incentives to encourage participation;
- Explore the feasibility of a City Council led lettings and property management agency to provide effective interventions in raising standards in the private rented sector;
- Lobby the government for a better deal on funding, the raising of the borrowing cap for council housing, security of tenure, to resolve issues around leaseholders, to improve energy and space standards and to define affordable homes;
- Undertake a review of debt collection services.



Newcastle Labour is the only party that campaigns across the city, all year round

For more information about Newcastle Labour, or to get involved, please contact us:

Email: info@newcastlelabour.org.uk

Web: www.newcastlelabour.org.uk

Twitter: @NewcastleLabour

Join the Labour Party

You can join our ever-growing movement online at www.labour.org.uk

Promoted by Susan Dungworth on behalf of Newcastle Labour,
both at Labour Central, King's Manor, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6PA